

**MINUTES  
TOWN COUNCIL MEETING  
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 13, 2009 AT 7:15 PM  
RICHARD E. MASTRANGELO CHAMBER  
ADMINISTRATION BUILDING**

Watertown student Frankie Hession called the meeting to order.

1. **ROLL CALL:** A regular meeting of the Town Council was called to order at 7:15 pm in the Richard E. Mastrangelo Chamber, Administration Building. Present for the meeting were Councilors Stephen P. Corbett, Marilyn M. Petitto Devaney, Susan G. Falkoff, Jonathan Hecht, Angeline B. Kounelis, John J. Lawn, Jr., Vincent J. Piccirilli, Jr., Vice President Mark S. Sideris and Council President Clyde L. Younger. Also present were the Town Manager Michael J. Driscoll, Town Attorney Mark Reich and Council Clerk Valerie Papas.

A Moment of Silence was held for the passing of long time resident Edward O'Brien, father of Maureen Aquilano, Town employee. The Chair noted the many capacities Mr. O'Brien has served in including Town Meeting, Cable Advisory, Watertown Youth Hockey, and Democratic Committee Member. The Manager highlighted Mr. O'Brien's longtime involvement with youth hockey since 1977.

2. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**
3. **ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES: September 22nd.** Councilor Sideris moved to accept the Minutes as written, seconded by Councilor Kounelis and adopted by voice vote.
4. **PUBLIC FORUM: None noted.**
5. **COMMITTEE REPORTS:**
  - a) Committee on Budget & Fiscal Oversight report and action on Chapter 358 and a report on the Retirement Board's Funding Schedule - Mark S. Sideris, Chair. Councilor Sideris read the committee report (attached) and noted that Councilor Devaney submitted a statement for inclusion. Councilor Sideris indicated that the Manager is against adding the four individuals to Chapter 358 as they were not part of the original group that was eligible in 2004 and wishes not to set a precedent. Pros and cons were discussed at the committee level and are included in the report. The Committee voted unanimously against accepting Chapter 358 for those

employees who were not eligible in 2004. Councilor Devaney read her statement in favor of accepting Chapter 358, pension benefits. She noted that it was a fairness issue. She noted that the cap would be \$1,500 per year. The Chair recognized Ms. Joan Keene who read a statement (attached) in favor of Chapter 358. She noted that she has 10 years of employment with the State and 17 years of employment with the Town of Watertown; for a combined 27 years.

Councilor Sideris moved to accept the report with the two attachments, seconded by Councilor Devaney and adopted by voice vote.

Councilor Devaney moved to adopt Chapter 358, seconded by Councilor Lawn. The Chair stated that this was adopted by the Retirement Board. Upon a roll call vote, the motion was defeated by a vote of 2 in favor and 7 against; with Councilor Devaney and the Chair voting in favor.

Councilor Sideris continued with the second item regarding the Retirement Board Funding Schedule. Councilor Sideris noted that there will be a \$38 million dollar impact to the town if the schedule is not extended. Councilor Sideris indicated that the Manager spoke in favor of extending the schedule an additional four years as well as by the Retirement Board. No recommendation was needed by the Committee. Councilor Sideris moved to accept the report, seconded by Councilor Piccirilli and adopted by voice vote.

- b) Committee on Economic Development and Planning report and action on the appointment and reappointments of Zoning and Planning board members – Jonathan Hecht, Chair. Councilor Hecht read the Committee report (attached) which elaborated on the Committee's interviews with each of the candidates. Councilor Sideris moved to approve the report, seconded by Councilor Falkoff and adopted by voice vote. Councilor Hecht read and moved the four candidates to their respective committees, seconded by Councilor Sideris and adopted by voice vote.
- c) Committee on Public Works report on business trash collection – Susan G. Falkoff, Chair. Councilor Piccirilli read the committee report (attached); with Councilor Falkoff reading the follow up section of the committee report. Councilor Piccirilli noted that the six business owners who attended the committee meeting were in favor of keeping the service despite a possible increase in fee. It was further noted that the business owners felt that even with a possible increase, it is still less expensive than paying for a private trash collection. Business recycling was also requested; as it is not currently offered. Eliminating the program was also discussed with additional meetings to be scheduled.

Councilor Falkoff read the remaining items in the committee report regarding Storm Water issues and snow removal.

The Chair spoke against raising fees or eliminating business trash removal without hearing from other business owners and in favor of making business trash removal more attractive to use rather than less attractive.

Councilor Falkoff and Councilor Corbett noted that additional meetings will take place with raw data from the Department of Public Works before any recommendation is brought to the Town Council.

Councilor Lawn indicated that a few business owners contacted him and stated that they would be willing to pay more for the service than lose the service altogether.

Superintendent Mee reiterated that additional meetings will take place.

- d) Committee on Education and School System matters on the reappointment of a Cable Access Corporation member – Vincent J. Piccirilli, Jr., Chair. Councilor Piccirilli read the committee report and moved to reconfirm Mr. Field to the Cable Access Corporation, seconded by Councilor Devaney and adopted by voice vote. Councilor Piccirilli moved to reappoint Allie Altman, seconded by Councilor Devaney and adopted by voice vote.

Councilor Sideris moved to Suspend the Rules in order to bring forward agenda items under section 7, seconded by Councilor Piccirilli and adopted by voice vote.

## **7. MOTIONS, ORDERS AND RESOLUTIONS:**

- a) Acceptance of Proclamation: Recognizing Watertown Walks to School Month – Vincent J. Piccirilli, Jr. Councilor Piccirilli read and presented the proclamation to Ms. Jeannette Belcher Sceptiss. Councilor Sideris moved to accept the proclamation, seconded by Councilor Hecht and adopted by voice vote.
- b) Acceptance of Proclamation: Recognizing Italian Heritage Month – Clyde L. Younger and Marilyn M. Petitto Devaney. Councilor Devaney read the proclamation and provided background to the resolution. Councilor Sideris moved the proclamation, seconded by Councilor Piccirilli and adopted by voice vote.
- c) Acceptance of Proclamations: Recognizing Mario Orangio, first Italian Fire Chief and Steven DeAngelis, President of Sons of Italy – Clyde L. Younger. The Chair introduced the proclamations. Councilor Devaney moved the proclamations, seconded by Councilor Devaney and adopted by voice vote.

## **6. INFORMATIONAL PRESENTATION FROM TOWN OFFICERS AND EMPLOYEES:**

- a) Informational Presentation on SAT and Spring 2009 MCAS test results – Dr. Ann Koufman-Frederick, Superintendent of Schools (attached).

Councilor Corbett stated that we are committed to education with smaller class sizes and spending, but that the results are not there. He suggested that goals be set and looked at over time with raw numbers and not just comparing results at State levels.

Councilor Lawn stated that some of the grammar schools have slipped which was hard to explain. He spoke against the comparisons to the State noting that it would be more helpful to see the scores over the years; looking at the neighboring towns which are doing better and see where we are in terms of spending with other towns.

Councilor Devaney stated that she could not account for the scores but noted how impressed she was attending the eight grade middle school graduation that this class had more students earning presidential awards than any other class in the past twenty five years. She further noted how significant it was as this was the smallest class ever compared to the large number of students in the past years. She stated that she was equally impressed with the high school graduates as many students earned high honors and some had perfect attendance records. She expressed her appreciation to the principals and teachers who have given so much of their time with these students. She commented that she had two grandchildren graduating from each school.

Councilor Piccirilli stated that the drop from 2008 and 2009 is the most dramatic item on the graph and indicated that there may be more to be made from those who are taking SAT's and not actually going on to college and the impact on scores.

Councilor Hecht commended the physics portion of the SAT scores noting how above head and shoulders we are in that area.

Councilor Falkoff requested comparisons on SAT's scores from students who go onto college only.

## **7. MOTIONS, ORDERS AND RESOLUTIONS:**

- a) Acceptance of Proclamation: Recognizing Watertown Walks to School Month – Vincent J. Piccirilli, Jr. Previously adopted.
- b) Acceptance of Proclamation: Recognizing Italian Heritage Month – Clyde L. Younger and Marilyn M. Petitto Devaney. Previously adopted.
- c) Acceptance of Proclamations: Recognizing Mario Orangio, first Italian Fire Chief and Steven DeAngelis, President of Sons of Italy – Clyde L. Younger. Previously adopted.

- d) Resolution approving the Acceptance of Gift of Materials, Supplies, and Services from Bentley University to add a Press/Media Area and storage room at the John A. Ryan Arena. Mr. Daniel Brothers, Skating Rink Director provided a brief overview of the above matter. Councilor Sideris moved to accept the resolution, seconded by Councilor Devaney and adopted by voice vote.
- e) Resolution supporting the goal of reconfiguring part of Mt. Auburn St. to improve pedestrian and traffic safety – Jonathan Hecht. Councilor Hecht highlighted two recent accidents; a young girl struck at a cross walk on Common Street and an elderly resident struck and killed crossing Mt. Auburn Street. He noted the dangers of motorist changing lanes along Mt. Auburn Street as it relates to the Hosmer Elementary School and pedestrian crossings at various points along the long and winding 4 lane road. It was noted that Superintendent Mee is looking to bump out curves to reduce the crossing width for those using the pedestrian cross walks. Councilor Hecht noted that re-striping Mt. Auburn Street to one travel lane in each direction is cost effective and will improve safety. He further noted that many of our streets are already one travel lane and that this resolution would be consistent with where we are headed with the planned bump outs and is tremendously positive in a fiscally responsible way. Councilor Hecht elaborated on the processes as stated in the resolution.

Councilor Devaney thanked former Councilor Gus Bailey for bringing this issue to the Council noting his call to her regarding the reconfiguration of Mt. Auburn Street to one lane. She noted that this is timely and hopes that we can go forward with the resolution.

Councilor Lawn stated that the traffic on Mt. Auburn Street and Main Street both need to be slowed down. He noted that Main Street is already one lane, but that many motorists believe it is two lanes because of the width of the street. Councilor Lawn indicated that he has spoken with Mr. Mee and requested that Main Street be re-striped so that the one lane is marked clearly for motorists. Councilor Lawn spoke in support of re-striping all of Mt. Auburn Street so as not to do piece meal work.

Councilor Falkoff stated that an additional danger with the four lane road is at pedestrian crossings with cones; the vehicle on the right will stop, as mandated by law, for the pedestrian entering the cross walk while the motorist on the left, who has less visibility and no advance notice to what has taken place, often cannot stop in time which puts the pedestrian in danger of being hit.

Councilor Kounelis stated that a public process is missing as the opportunity was not given to the public to come forward and voice their concerns. For every action is a reaction, she noted. She stated that she is not sure what reducing lanes will do to other streets. She hopes that more improvements are made on Mt. Auburn Street near the school. The issue

is public input and she would like to hear from the experts first, she stated, before it is put in black and white.

Councilor Corbett stated that the resolution makes a lot of sense for all the reasons that have been stated and that the only reason not to do it is if the data did not support reducing lanes.

Councilor Hecht stated that the Coolidge Square Study concluded that one lane with turning lanes is what would be proposed for Coolidge Square. A consensus was that one lane was adequate and other heavily traveled streets in Watertown are already one lane.

The Chair spoke in support of having the matter referred to the Traffic Commission before a resolution is adopted by the Town Council in order to allow for greater public process and transparency. Mr. Mee noted that this is acceptable whether it comes from the Traffic Commission or the Town Council. He indicated that he is in support of reducing the lanes on Mt. Auburn Street from four to two. Mr. Mee stated that a traffic study is needed.

Attorney Reich concurred that allocation of funds is needed for a traffic study.

Councilor Falkoff stated that there should be a sense of urgency and that perhaps a sense of the council is needed.

Former Councilor Gus Bailey spoke in support of the proposed resolution noting that he had proposed a similar plan for North Beacon and Charles River Road which was adopted and implemented.

Councilor Devaney moved to send the matter to the Traffic Commission for a public hearing which would include Main Street.

Councilor Piccirilli stated that the Council is the policy maker and the resolution puts the Council on record saying that Mr. Mee and others will be formulizing the process. The resolution also says we support the idea and requests steps such as funding and traffic study, etc that the Council would expect. And that expanding it to support Main Street; and get the most bang for the buck.

Councilor Kounelis stated she supports the resolution in theory and concept. She expressed concern that public input comes after the traffic study and therefore she cannot support the resolution.

The Manager spoke in support of the resolution; and noted that any change in the traffic will result in a change of the traffic control agreement. He takes the resolution as a policy statement and indicated that Mr. Mee is in support of these changes. He would like the Traffic Commission to

review this matter in concert with Mr. Mee moving forward with a traffic study.

Councilor Sideris spoke in support of the proposed resolution, noting that the public will be able to weigh in on the matter. This puts the community on notice that the Council is putting this on the Table to be carried forward.

Councilor Liazos introduced Mt. Auburn Street resident, Lynn Baines who helped spear head the resolution and noted that this is an emergency and that a timeframe should be put on it.

Ms Baines stated that there is incredible support for this resolution and noted that she will submit the signed petition to the Traffic Commission.

Councilor Kounelis seconded Councilor Devaney's motion to refer the matter to the Traffic Commission.

After further discussion, Councilor Devaney withdrew her previous motion and moved to make a friendly amendment to the proposed resolution by removing "from Common Street to Upland Road", seconded by Councilor Hecht. Upon a voice vote, it was adopted. On the Main Motion to adopt the resolution as amended, it was adopted by voice vote with Councilor Kounelis voting no.

Councilor Piccirilli moved that the Council support the re-striping of the western portion of Main Street as one travel lane and one bike lane in each direction and requests the Town Manager to include that along with the steps to reconfigure Mount Auburn Street, seconded by Councilor Lawn and adopted by voice vote.

Councilor Piccirilli moved to suspend the rules in order to take up the remaining items after 10:30 pm, seconded by Councilor Lawn and adopted by voice vote.

## **8. PRESIDENT'S REPORT:**

- a) The Town Manager's contract and referral to subcommittee. Councilor Devaney moved the matter, seconded by Councilor Sideris and adopted by voice vote.
- b) The Chair asked for an update on negotiations with Verizon Fios adding the importance of competition for residents.
- c) The Chair asked when Waltham Street will be repaved.

## **9. COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE TOWN MANAGER:**

a) Correspondence regarding the Pleasant Street Reconstruction Project and request for referral to Committee. Councilor Sideris moved to refer the matter to Public Works, seconded by Councilor Piccirilli and adopted by voice vote.

1. Last day to register to vote – tomorrow.
2. Flu Clinic – Senior Center tomorrow from 9-11am.
3. Tire Drop Off – this Saturday from 9-2pm. No rims.
4. Yard Waste Date – October 23<sup>rd</sup>;
5. State Highway Safety Division has announced that the Watertown Police Department will be honored for their annual campaign/challenge to reduce traffic fatalities and loss.
6. Budget Process starts two weeks from tonight with a preliminary budget overview.

## **10. REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION**

Councilor Kounelis asked for a status update on the following items: Mt. Auburn Cemetery Pilot; Fillipello Park plaques; Wells Avenue/Citizens Bank parking; and automated trash collection.

## **11. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Councilor Kounelis announced that House Bill 1825 regarding Marijuana has not moved along in the State House. A meeting will be scheduled when Mr. Ward and Chief Deveau receive more information.

Councilor Devaney read a statement (attached to minutes) regarding deducting water rates from income taxes. She noted that after assimilating all the data it was clear that such a program would not be feasible for Watertown homeowners.

The Chair stated that the report on the subject matter is concluded as of this evening.

## **12. PUBLIC FORUM – none.**

**13. ADJOURNMENT** Councilor Sideris moved to adjourn the meeting at 11:00 pm, seconded by Councilor Hecht and adopted by voice vote.

## **14. EXECUTIVE SESSION – cancelled due to lateness of the evening.**

**I hereby certify that at a regular meeting of the Town Council for which a quorum was present, the above minutes were adopted on October 27<sup>th</sup> by voice vote and as amended.**

**Clyde L. Younger, Council President**